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THE ORACLE

A MUSIC-DRAMA

By

PETER ROBERTSON

and

HUMPHREY J. STEWART

BOHEMIA
MCMX



THE ORACLE

*A Music-Drama especially written for
and first produced at the dedication of
the new home of the Bohemian Club,
San Francisco, on Saturday, November
the twelfth, nineteen hundred and ten.*

Book by PETER ROBERTSON

Music by H. J. STEWART

<i>Apollo</i>	-	-	-	-	-	H. McDONALD SPENCER
<i>Euterpe, Muse of Song</i>	-	-	-	-	-	WYATT ALLEN
<i>Thalia, Muse of Comedy</i>	-	-	-	-	-	J. C. DORNIN
<i>Calliope, Muse of Poetry</i>	-	-	-	-	-	HARRIS ALLEN
<i>Messenger of the Lares</i>	-	-	-	-	-	FRANK MITCHELL
<i>High Priests of Apollo</i>	-	{	-	-	-	FRANK P. DEERING E. COURTNEY FORD
<i>Assistant Priests of Apollo</i>	-	{	-	-	-	FRANK ONSLOW CARL E. ANDERSON REGINALD E. G. KEENE HENRY L. PERRY
<i>Attendant of Bohemia</i>	-	-	-	-	-	ROY RYONE
<i>Bohemia</i>	-	-	-	-	-	ALLAN DUNN

Chorus of Greek Populace

Dramatic Ensemble by ALLAN DUNN

Stage Manager, WM. H. SMITH

Scenery, GEORGE LYONS

Lighting, ED. J. DUFFEY

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THE ORACLE

Interior of a Temple of Apollo. At the back is the Shrine of the Oracle. It is nightfall and the assemblage is present at the appeal to the Oracle of a stranger from a far off country.

Eternal Mystery, the Mystery of Fate!
The Temple's silence, vibrant, trembles in its awe;
The craven hearts of men stand still 'twixt fear and hope;
They quake before the Unseen Presence of the Gods;
The Gods, at whose brief nod the destinies of men
In misery sink or to a triumph glorious rise.

By Will divine the shuttle noiseless weaves the web;
By Will divine the blending strands take hue and shade;
By Will divine the fatal shears their angles close;
So mortals die and pass as falls the severed thread.
As secret as the farthest future of our days,
The moment of our lives that lies so close beyond.

Dust of our Mother Earth, our Frames!
Breath of the Gods, our Souls!
Oh, gift divine! and by that gift alone
Mortals may pray and Deities attend.

Powers who, with the unuttered thought, create;
Powers who, with the unuttered wish, destroy;
For all our weakness be ye pitiful!
For all our mortal evil, merciful!
Grant us what Gods and men alike may crave,
Eternal Happiness!

Enter the High and Attendant Priests.

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

Glorious Apollo!
From thy Celestial Orb
All being springs.

Thy gentle beam, wooing the clod,
Charms from the sullen clay
Leaf, flower, and fruit.
The eyes of mortals, touched by thy pure ray
As with a spell,
Behold a world all loveliness.
'Twas thus the Gods, in love, into men's frames breathed life.
Through beauty still thou speakest to men's souls.

TWO ATTENDANT PRIESTS

The Source of Life the Gods have made thy charge;
Thou see'st far into the fates of men;
Even to the end, if that there be an end!
To thee no time, no distance nor to thee
The Future, nor the Present, nor the Past.
All is as if 'twere one. Thy Prophecy,
The unsealed purpose of the Gods.

TWO ATTENDANT PRIESTS

The spheres at thy command make music,
And the sweet, melodious strains
That move men's souls on earth
Spring from thy lyre divine!

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS AND THE CHORUS

Glorious Apollo!
Thy chariot wheels to mortal ears unheard,
Thy steeds unseen;
Thine Orb of Fire Celestial silent rolls;
From jocund Earth springs Life all beautiful;
And, from the hearts of men, a song of joy,
Swayed by thy lyre,
To music of the spheres.
But by thy Will, through this, thine Oracle,
May mortals trembling peer into their fates.
Here at thy shrine we wait in awe
The mystic message from the Infinite!

THE PRIESTS

Apollo, Hear!

THE CHORUS

Apollo, Hear!

THE PRIESTS

Apollo, Hear!

THE CHORUS

Apollo, Hear!

THE PRIESTS

Apollo, Hear!

THE CHORUS

Apollo, Hear!

A light begins to glow within the shrine.

THE CHORUS

The Oracle!

THE CHORUS

The radiant light, light of the God,
Glow from the shrine;
Through dazzled eyes of mortals
Pierces to their souls!
The Oracle!
Our prayers are heard!

A HIGH PRIEST

The God will speak!

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

Who would consult the Oracle,
And tempt the hidden secret of his fate?

BOHEMIA

I!

Enter Bohemia.

A HIGH PRIEST

Who art thou?

BOHEMIA

From a far off land I come!

A HIGH PRIEST

There is no far off land; unto the Gods
All lands are near!
What would'st thou know?
Hast thou an argosy upon the deep?
Would'st ask the Gods to search a woman's heart?
Or dost thou crave a boon for thine own self?

BOHEMIA

No argosy have I;
Nor care I for the beat of woman's heart.
No boon I crave. I would but ask
The counsel of the God.
My country is Bohemia!
There have we raised a temple.
Consecrate—

A HIGH PRIEST

The God has read thy thought!

THE CHORUS

The God has read thy thought.
The Oracle!

VOICE OF THE ORACLE

What thou see'st is not seen.
What thou knowest is not known.
What thou doest is not done.

BOHEMIA

The words I hear. Their meaning mystic
As the shrine.

A HIGH PRIEST

The Temple which thine eyes behold is all unseen.
Thy purpose is not finite as thy knowledge is.
Thy consecration is an act that never ends.

BOHEMIA

Still do I listen!

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

The Temples of the Gods are in men's souls.
Theirs not the What thou doest, but the Why.
Nor carved stones, nor pillars, nor the festive halls.
The music nor the laughter; nor the light heart,
Nor even the kind deed,
Nor aught thou showest outwardly; but only this,
Thy thought, its meaning, and the spirit of thine act!

BOHEMIA

We are but mortals, and to mortals is forbid
Perfection of the Gods. Yet would we strive that so
Our thought, its meaning, and the spirit of our act
May for Bohemia win the favor of the Fates.

VOICE OF THE ORACLE

Thy fate is not in thee.

BOHEMIA

Again thy words are mystic.

A HIGH PRIEST

The wind that steals away the vagrant seed
Changes its destiny.

A HIGH PRIEST

The stream that gently murmurs through the glen
Bears many a fate.

BOHEMIA

These be the things that have no souls. I speak of Men!

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

The Gods have made Mankind, not Men;
Each soul its own, to render back
Stained or unstained;
The peril theirs!
That fire divine, which Men call Life,
Is but the spirit of the Universe.

BOHEMIA

Yet for all Men are fates—

A HIGH PRIEST

The Fates weave not the future.
Out of each moment is a moment born;
Inheritor of every splendor, grace, or taint
Of all the aeons Men have known as time.
That moment is thy fate!

BOHEMIA

The Gods have woven the aeons!

A HIGH PRIEST

Men make Men's fates! The Furies, Men!
Each thought and act is fate,
Not for thyself alone, but for thy Fellowman,
Oh, purblind race, the Gods pursue you not.
The Will of High Olympus is the Law!

BOHEMIA

So have the Gods of High Olympus made Mankind,
Souls, kindred to themselves, chained in coarse frames of clay,
The Creatures of a Law, now cruel and now kind;
A Law inscrutable, Men must not comprehend!
The high ideal nursed within the soul, and sought
With eager will, is but a dream. It is the Law!
The sentient thrill of beauty, throbbing for an hour,
Turns into pain as beauty fades. It is the Law!
The hope that stirs the souls of men becomes a pang,
All bitter as it vanishes. It is the Law!

The love twixt man and woman that brings joy untold
Its own keen shafts of torture bears. It is the Law!
The mother's heart that, o'er her offspring, beats with bliss
Beats faster with an unknown fear. It is the Law!
The blessing that, with all our earnest prayer, we crave
Comes not; but in its place, howe'er 'tis undeserved,
There falls the blow we dreamed not of. It is the Law!
The will to do all kindness, owning not the means;
The right that turns to wrong; the good deed misconstrued,
Changed into ill; the ill deed done that we revenge;
The ill deed done that we forgive; all might not be!
Life knows no everlasting or unsullied joy!
It is the Law!

THE CHORUS

Bold is Bohemia!
He flouts the Gods!

BOHEMIA

I do not flout the Gods! All reverently I speak.
The grain of dust beneath the avalanche were more
Than I, did but the Gods of High Olympus breathe.

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

The God is patient!

VOICE OF THE ORACLE

The stones of earth have reason in them.

A HIGH PRIEST

Thou comest of the race Deucalion raised
By Jove's command.

THE CHORUS

In Ancient Days,
The World was Paradise,
So fair, the Gods abode with men,
And filled their life with radiance
As of Heaven.

Till, in the Age of Iron,
Drunk with false pride
Of the Celestial favor,
Men defied the Gods,
Stained the fair World
With sin and crime,
Dared to probe
Into great Nature's secrets,
And disdained
Even Jove himself!

Then rose the God in rage majestic,
Hurling forth the storm,
With flood tempestuous, He
Swept them to Chaos!

From stones of earth
Deucalion cast behind,
Jove framed a race anew;
Made them know pain;
They might not then forget
Mortality.

BOHEMIA

Within my soul I feel but reverent fear and awe.
My words a prayer!

VOICE OF THE ORACLE

Who would dispute the Means
Should know the End.

A HIGH PRIEST

Men's craving is not prayer.
The Gods are just.
Men pray for their desire,
Not knowing oft th' injustice of the wish.

A HIGH PRIEST

Thou may'st deserve;
But thy deserving given,
From others may take that they more deserve.
Thou canst not know!

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

The knowledge that thou seekest
Is not for thy good!
The zest of life lies ever in suspense.
The ill foreknown kills every joy
That comes between;
The happiness foreseen
Is in anticipation lost.
Without the sorrow, who could know the joy;
Without the misery, who could happy be?

THE CHORUS

The thrill of beauty lives within the pain;
Behind the pang, the pleasure of new hope;
Twice sweet the love that is from torture freed;
The mother's bliss would into folly turn,
But for the unknown fear;
The wrong is oft the right;
The right oft wrong;
The ill deed more a blessing than the good,
The Gods alone may know!

BOHEMIA

Men still seek happiness; since by thy Law alone,
May mortals make the lesser part of life the pain,
We crave thy counsel. Let us know but how to live!

VOICE OF THE ORACLE

Turn to thyself!

A HIGH PRIEST

The Gods have given thee reason. Since it leads
Thee to pursue the Mysteries for thy Good,
And for thy Purpose High, thy boldness is forgiven!
The Law thou hast.

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

Upon thy Conscience carved,
As on a stone, thou hast the Law,
So often, unconsidered, coned,

That its Commandments pass
Like proverbs without meaning
From each tongue.
Read thou thy Conscience,
Therein shalt thou find
This Law!

THE CHORUS

In bounds and limits all things work for good.
Love well, but be not blind
To evil that love may beget.
Hate thou, but pity still,
The evil man as evil thing.
The ill, when 'tis revenged
Is all undone;
The ill with patience met
Falls on its source.
The kindness willed
Without the means
Is more than kindness
That seeks gratitude.
Seek not reward;
Who seeks reward
May merit punishment.
So follow thou the Good,
And leave thy soul
To judgment of the Power Supreme,
Who knoweth all!

BOHEMIA

The Gods are Wisdom; wise must be the end.
I ask no more but strength to do thy will.

VOICE OF THE ORACLE

What thou hast, thou shalt receive!

A HIGH PRIEST

The Gods have loved thee long, Bohemia,
Through all thy mortal failings,
Still thy aims approved.
The Muses long have dwelt with thee.

And now renew the gifts
They gave thee at thy birth.
The Muse of Song salutes thee!

Euterpe enters and presents the Lyre.

THE CHORUS

Hail, Muse of Song!
Harmony Infinite!
Thou quellest all things base;
To thy mysterious thrill
The pulses of the Universe keep time;
The Earth inanimate throbs at thy sound;
The mortal frame, vibrant beneath the spell
Thou castest on the soul, becomes a lyre.
Hail, Muse of Song!

Exit Euterpe

A HIGH PRIEST

Thalia greets thee!

Thalia enters and gives the Mask.

THE CHORUS

Hail, Muse of Comedy!
Thy mimic power plays on the lives of men,
Thy smiling mask oft hiding purpose grave;
Thy keen shafts prick the bubble of the vain,
Shame base hypocrisy, and at thy laugh
Things sordid shrink to naught.
The merriment of life is thine, and oft
Thou bringest men the tear wrapt in the smile.
Hail, Muse of Comedy,
Hail! Hail!

Exit Thalia

A HIGH PRIEST

The Muse of Poetry crowns thee!

Enter Calliope and gives the Scroll.

THE CHORUS

Hail, Muse of Poetry!
The soul of all things dost thou find,
And lo! all things are beautiful,
The shining green of hill and plain,
The barren rock, the mountain rill,
The raging torrent, and the roaring main.
Lo! thou art there!
The grosser life of man knows not of thee;
Thou ever art in him whose soul is pure;
And in that soul there lies thy noblest theme,
The Infinite!
Hail, Muse of Poetry,
Hail! Hail!

Exit Calliope

BOHEMIA

To be but worthy these, is gift divine!
These sacred do I hold,
To thy High Purpose consecrate
Now and forever.

A HIGH PRIEST

Yet one more message have the Gods for thee!
Thy Lares welcome thee!
Spirits of those, whom, from Bohemia,
The Gods have ta'en, and for their love of thee
Lent to thee still, thy Watch and Guard!

A HIGH PRIEST

Hearken! they speak!

THE CHORUS OF THE LARES

Though you no more behold us, no more hear
Our voices echoing through the festal halls
In song and jest and laughter; cannot know
The love in which we left you still is yours,
The Gods have willed that we our memories hold,
Of all the glow and warmth of genial soul
That is Bohemia! Willed that for our love

We should around you hover evermore,
Cluster about your hearth, your Household Gods!
Your revels and your moments of grave speech,
The merry hour, the peace unspeakable,
The ever kindly thought, the generous deed,
We have our part in, though you know it not.
Hold to these ever! Let no discord be,
To mar Bohemia's loving harmony!

Enter the Messenger of the Lares, bearing mantle.

*The High Priests invest Bohemia with the mantle, on the
breadth of which is emblazoned an owl.*

THE MESSENGER

This gift thy Lares send, symbol of attribute,
Nearest the Gods, Love of thy Fellowman!

THE ATTENDANT PRIESTS

The Gods made life the sunshine;
Care and pain but passing clouds.
They ask no sacrifice; better far they love
Those who with garlands deck the shrine!

THE MESSENGER OF THE LARES

With wreath of bay thy brows are crowned;
With gift of song thou art endowed;
Thalia's mirthful mask is thine;
Still take thou heed of what they Lares send!

Be thou but true!
Open wide thy heart to all the joys of life;
Spare not the pleasures that the Gods may send!
Thy happy revelry can hold no strife
With graver purpose; all things work their end!

Forget not that, without thee, there is pain,
And care forever hovers round thy door;
That sympathy bears sorrow in its train;
And others' woes but draw them to thee more!

Within thee let the weary soul find rest,
The saddened spirit lighten with thy cheer;
Love of thy Fellowman, be that thy best
And chiefest virtue, by the Gods held dear.
Be thou but true!

BOHEMIA

So to the Will and Purpose of the Highest Good
Is our Bohemia's Fane forever dedicate!
The Gods have said!

*Apollo appears, Bohemia kneels before the shrine as Apollo
crowns him with his fillet.*

THE PRIESTS

With fairest garlands wreathe Bohemia's walls,
Let joy re-echo through Bohemia's halls,
The paeon raise!

Praise ye the Power Supreme,
The Power Omnipotent!
Around whose throne the Universes swing
In harmony sublime!

Life infinite dwells in Him,
And from his store
He peoples the unnumbered worlds.

Praise ye the Power Allseeing, who, on high,
Men's lives through tortuous ways,
Guides to His End,
His End the Good!

Praise ye the Power Omniscient,
Wisdom Absolute!
Whose law benign,
If men but heed,
Leads to immortal bliss!

With songs of joy
Praise ye Bohemia's God,
His Will be done!

(The End)

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